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YET ANOTHER BIG ACQUISITION FOR THE RED SOX {page 18}

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Wednesday, December 5, 2012

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

Abandoned. Animal

▶ This 7-month-old Maltese puppy, now named "Snowball," was recently found injured with a note attached explaining its owner could no longer care for him. {page 02}

T's ticketing app more than quadruples its sales in a week

- Transit officials report 'tremendous' response from customers buying tickets with smartphones
- Usage expected to grow as word spreads {page 04}

wellbeing

Don't eat so much that you're asked to play Santa Claus

- The holidays are fun for feasting, but go easy this year
- Ho, ho, hold the extra calories! {page 16}

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Jurors deciding fate of former treasurer

MASSACHUSETTS. In closing arguments yesterday, lawyers for the defense and prosecution alternately cast former Treasurer Tim Cahill as a public servant who put the well-being of the Massachusetts State Lottery above his own political fortunes and as a schemer who plundered the agency's ad budget to enhance his image among voters while running for governor in 2010.

▶ Tim Cahill

"This trial has been about showing that in fact that is why those lottery ads ran. The lottery ads ran to give Mr. Cahill a boost in his campaign for governor," prosecutor James O'Brien said toward the end of his roughly 45-minute closing statement.

Cahill and co-defendant Scott Campbell have been charged with conspiring to gain an unwarranted privilege and to commit procurement fraud by directing the Massachusetts State Lottery to run self-promotional TV and radio ads at the behest of the campaign. Both have pleaded not guilty.

Yesterday, about a month after the opening statements, two men and two women were randomly selected as alternates and the jury was excused to begin its deliberations. **SHNS**

Boston Animal Rescue League treats injured abandoned pup

Maltese puppy left with broken foot Owner leaves anonymous note explaining injury, financial hardship

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

It is a story the Animal Rescue League of Boston sees fairly often — owners abandoning their pets because they can no longer afford to care for them.

Last week, a 7-month-old Maltese dog was left outside a cat shelter in Ashland, with an anonymous note taped to a crate that said the apparent owner did not have the means to care for the dog.

To make matters worse, the puppy had a broken paw.

"It is pretty common, unfortunately," said Jennifer Wooliscroft, the league's director of communications. "We understand that things get complicated and people can't always keep an animal. We don't judge, but we ask that people take them somewhere safe."

The owner wrote in the note, "I am sorry to do this but I am leaving this dog here [because] unfortunately I have no money to care for him."

Wooliscroft said abandonment exposes animals to unnecessary danger, like weather extremes and wildlife. It's also illegal, according to Lt. Alan Borgal, the director for the Center of Animal Protection.

After discovering the injured puppy, which has since been named Snowball, Ashland city officials reached out to the Animal Rescue League of Boston, which provided the dog with the orthopedic surgery necessary to alleviate his pain and regain mobility.

League Veterinarian Hugh Davis performed the procedure, and the league is covering all costs associated with the dog's care and rehabilitation, Wooliscroft said.

▶ Snowball is now on the mend after undergoing surgery for a broken paw at the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

The plucky puppy continues to jump and play in spite of his newly acquired cast.

"The dog is adorable. He is a crazy cuteness overload. He is going to be just fine," Wooliscroft said, adding Snowball will recuperate at the league's facility until he is ready for adoption.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan.rousseau@metro.us

Can't care for your pet?

- Call the Animal Rescue League of Boston, or a local animal control facility or humane society.
- **Donate or help out by visiting www.arlboston.org/donate.**

An apologetic note

"To Whom It May Concern,

I am sorry to do this but I am leaving this dog here [because] unfortunately I have no money to care for him! His name is Mashimello. He is 7 months old, his vaccines are not up to date and I believe his left paw is fractured. He is very friendly and hopefully you may find him a home.

Thanks sincerely!"

Another doggie tail of success: Bella

Surgeons at the Angell Animal Medical Center announced yesterday that a first-of-its kind muscle transplant surgery performed three months ago enabled a six-year-old border collie named Bella to walk just six months after an accident disabled her right front leg, causing it to draw up and behind her until it was almost perpendicular to the floor.

Surgeons separated the triceps muscle on the back of the leg, easing its rigidity, and transferred a piece of back muscle to the front of the leg.

1

$225M

Gov. Deval Patrick announced yesterday that he is cutting spending in the Executive Branch by $225 million in an effort to close a budget gap for Fiscal Year 2013. Patrick's office attributed the $540 million gap to slowing economic growth and lower-than-anticipated tax collections. METRO

Today's local tweet

"PSA: Hardcore nose picker on the 73 bus today. AND he was reading a library book. #NotCool #LibraryMolestation #TouchNothing #MBTA"

@MODMAJA, WHO COULD NOT IGNORE THE MAN WITH HIS FINGER UP HIS NOSE

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In the news

Harbor squatter living a sailor's life on Hub water

BOSTON. The U.S. Coast Guard was patrolling Boston Harbor this week when they came across an unusual sight: a man apparently living out of his canoe and camping on a barge.

"Yes, this is the first time we've seen anything like this in the area," U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Robert Simpson said yesterday.

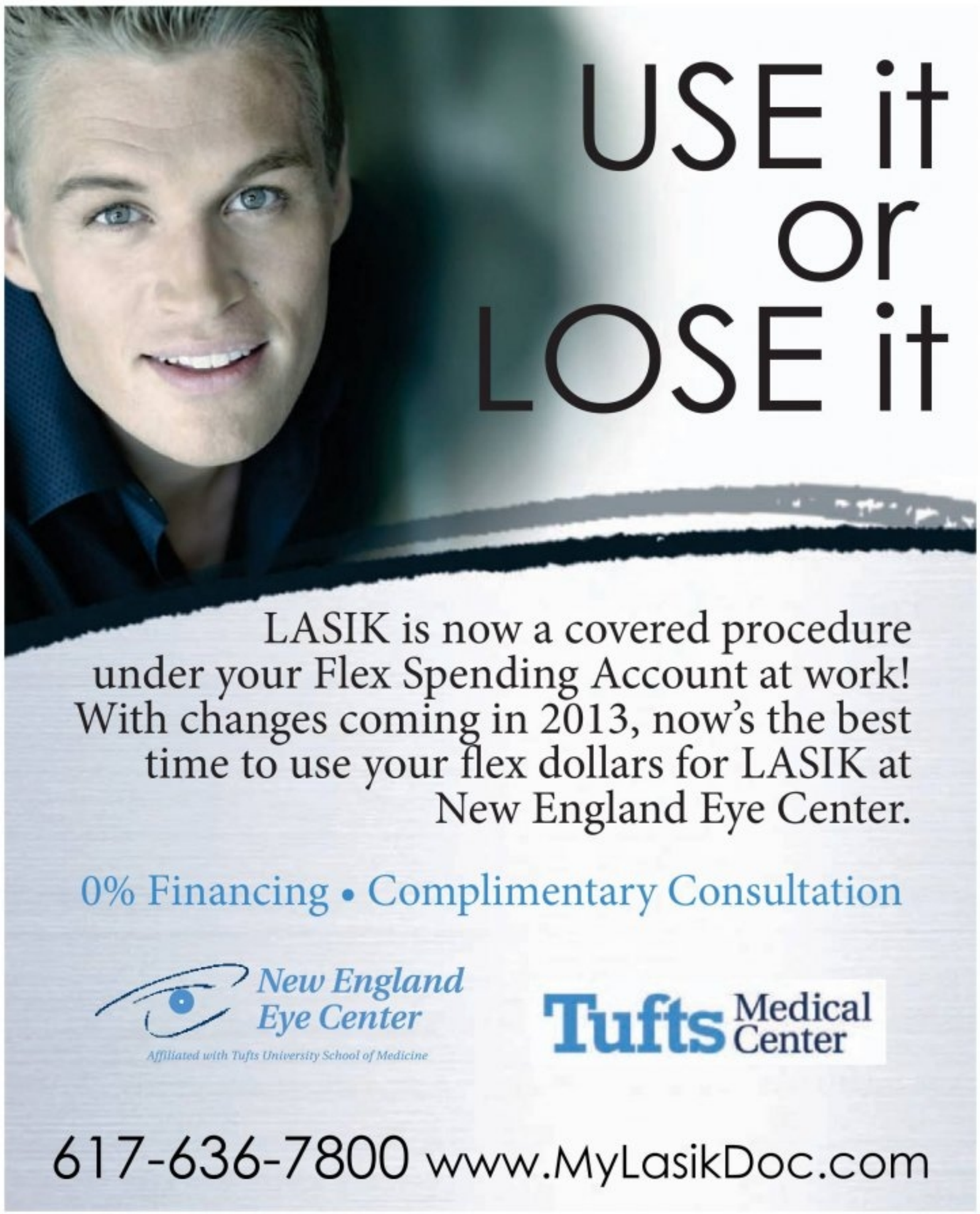
The man told a local television news station yesterday that his name was Michael Smith and that he hoped his newly found notoriety would raise awareness about homelessness.

Boston Police spokeswoman Cheryl Fiandaca said yesterday that Smith has been living on the harbor "on and off" for a couple of months.

"He has been out there on the water — we were aware of that. We had conversations with him and offered him services, but he's chosen not to take advantage of them," Fiandaca said.

Simpson said Coast Guard officials have not made contact with Smith but are keeping an eye on the situation.

METRO/MR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MBTA mobile ticket sales skyrocket since launch of app

Agency sees sharp rise in rides purchased with new mobile ticketing program About 2,000 commuters buy tickets with phones

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI/METRO

▶ A new app allows commuters to use their mobile devices to pay for the commuter rail.

Last Tuesday the MBTA's mobile ticketing app went live for commuters who travel through South Station, and since then the transit agency has seen "tremendous sales" and high volumes of customers opting to buy their ticket with their smartphones.

The technology, which launched for commuters at North Station three weeks ago, has gone over particularly well with riders on the Providence/Stoughton and Framingham/Worcester commuter lines, according to Joshua Robin, the MBTA's director of innovation.

"People are happiest there, but overall the response has been really positive. I think customers are very happy to see it [at South Station]," Robin said.

As of Tuesday morning, the app had sold $225,000 worth of commuter rail fares throughout the entire system, with most of the sales coming from 10-ride passes.

The rise is significant, Robin said, considering that as of last Tuesday the total dollar value of transactions was $53,780.

The app is also available for single ride tickets, as well as monthly passes.

For now, customers who buy a monthly pass using the mTicket app receive a $10 discount.

Robin said that incentive may not last forever.

"We're not planning for it to be permanent. We're trying it out during the pilot phase as a way to incentivise customers after we launched the app for monthly passes," he said.

For the rest of the week, T officials plan to continue mingling with commuters at rush hour with the hope of educating them about the app.

"We've been in the stations every night," Robin said. "Getting the word out and talking to riders makes all the difference."

$225K
Worth of commuter rail fares sold throughout the entire system, as of yesterday morning

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In the news

▶ Gillette Stadium

Gillette gets honor for veggie menu

FOXBOROUGH. The home of the New England Patriots is also the home to some praised vegetarian fare, according to a recent survey.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals ranked Gillette Stadium as the No. 2 vegetarian-friendly football venue in the country, according to the group's rankings released yesterday.

Gillette's black bean and grilled portobello mushroom burgers and grilled veggie flatbread wrap won praises from the group.

Topping the list was Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. METRO

More countdown signs at T stations

BOSTON. Yesterday the MBTA activated new countdown signs at Kendall/MIT Station in Cambridge and Andrews Station in South Boston.

The signs, which first made their debut at South Station in August, let passengers know when the next train is due.

MBTA Director of Innovation Josh Robin said passengers should "stay tuned over the next few weeks" for more signs. METRO

Boston school collaboration announcement expected today

BOSTON. City officials today are expected to announce major financial support for collaboration between Boston public, charter and Catholic schools.

Local officials will speak at the Conservatory Lab Charter School in Brighton to discuss progress on the compact, which Mayor Thomas Menino's spokesman called an "innovative initiative." METRO

Mattapan massacre: Jury looks for justice in retrial

- Jurors from Worcester County will get Mattapan massacre case today
- It's the second time this year fate of the alleged shooter will be decided

KAVANA SZYMCZAK/THE BOSTON GLOBE

▶ Dwayne Moore consults with his attorney, John Amabile, during closing arguments yesterday.

Whether anyone is held responsible for the murders of four people, including a mother and her 2-year-old son, is now up to a panel of jurors from Worcester County.

The roughly five-week retrial of Dwayne Moore, who prosecutors say shot five people, killing four of them, during a home invasion and robbery in Mattapan in 2010, ended yesterday with closing statements.

Moore's attorney, John Amabile, focused much of his argument on the credibility of a key witness, Kimani Washington, who admitted to participating in the robbery and said he left before Moore committed the murders. He signed a cooperating witness agreement with prosecutors and will serve about 16 years in jail.

First trial

Moore already faced a jury earlier this year with co-defendant Edward Washington. Washington was acquitted, and the jury could not reach a verdict on the murder charges facing Moore, triggering a mistrial.

When the mistrial was announced, victims' family members stormed out of the courtroom in anger and disbelief. Police were sent to the neighborhood where the murders took place, and Mayor Thomas Menino urged people to be good to one another.

The jury in the first trial deliberated for seven days.

"If he was a used-car salesman, he wouldn't sell one car," said Amabile, who pointed to Washington's criminal past and admitted role in the robbery. "He's a pimp, drug dealer and a thief. That's a great recipe for credibility, isn't it?"

Assistant District Attorney Edmond Zabin acknowledged Washington's criminal past and told jurors that they should believe Washington based upon the corroborating evidence.

"We never brought Kimani Washington before you to call him a hero," he said. "The question … is do you believe him."

A judge was expected to give the jury its deliberation instructions this morning.

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
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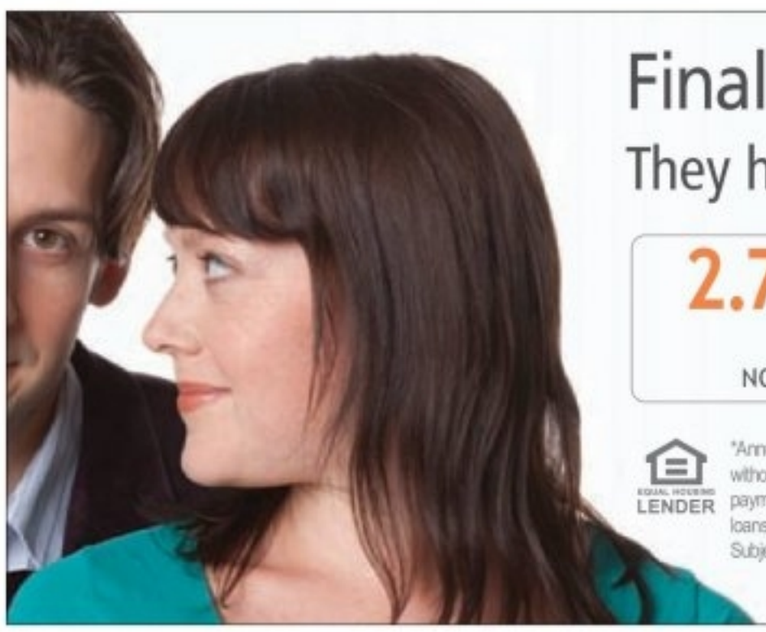

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METRO CREDIT UNION

Your brain on booze; GOP fights ... with itself

The real teenage wasteland: Your brain

Gene links to teen binge drinking

Scientists have unpicked the brain processes involved in teenage alcohol abuse and say their findings help explain why some young people have more of a tendency to binge drink.

A study published in the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences journal found that a gene known as RASGRF-2 plays a crucial role in controlling how alcohol stimulates the brain to release dopamine, triggering feelings of reward. "If people have a genetic variation of the RASGRF-2 gene, alcohol gives them a stronger sense of reward, making them more likely to be heavy drinkers," said Gunter Schumann, who led the study.

Alcohol and other addictive drugs activate the brain's dopamine systems. **REUTERS**

2.5M People die worldwide each year from the harmful use of alcohol

Homes going green

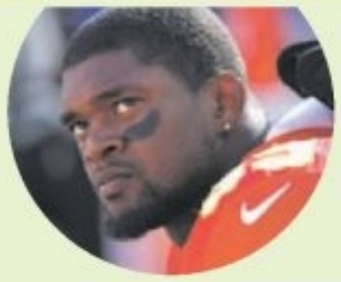
Home price jump highest in six years

Home prices posted their biggest annual jump in more than six years in October in a sign the housing sector continues to recover, data analysis firm CoreLogic said yesterday.

CoreLogic's home price index rose 6.3 percent compared to October a year ago, the biggest increase since June 2006 and the eighth consecutive increase in home prices nationally on a year-over-year basis, CoreLogic said.

Home prices fell 0.2 percent in October from September but this was due to seasonal factors as the housing market enters the off season, CoreLogic said. **REUTERS**

NFL tragedy



Belcher violence may never be explained

The murder/suicide committed on Saturday by Kansas City Chiefs football player Jovan Belcher left the National Football League, its fans and health professionals struggling to understand what drove him to do it.

Belcher, 25, shot and killed his 22-year-old girlfriend Kasandra Perkins, the mother of his 3-month-old daughter, in front of his own mother at home before driving to Arrowhead Stadium where he shot himself dead in the parking lot. **REUTERS**

Have cliff, will fight

Fiscal cliff prompts GOP infighting

Republicans in the Congress attacked each other yesterday over their leadership's "fiscal cliff" offer to Democratic President Barack Obama as a group of governors visited the White House to voice concern about the impact on the states of the year-end tax-and-spending deadline. The disarray in Republican ranks over how far to compromise the party's anti-tax stance could complicate what are expected to be intense negotiations between House Speaker John Boehner and Obama. Each will need the backing of their respective troops in Congress in order to bargain credibly. **REUTERS**

Life on Mars?

GETTY IMAGES

Rover finds carbon hints on Mars

NASA's Mars rover Curiosity, dispatched to look for the chemical ingredients and environments for microbial life, has found hints of carbon, though whether this building block for life on Earth has played a similar role on Mars is unknown, scientists said.

"Just finding carbon somewhere doesn't mean that it has anything to do with life, or the finding of a habitable environment," said lead scientist John Grotzinger. Even with carbon and water, life needs other chemicals, such as sulfur and oxygen, to form. **REUTERS**

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▶ All the gifts purchased will be sent directly to Metro's office. It's the third year of Metro Magic, where we ask our readers to go online to buy toys for underprivileged children.

The response so far this year has outshone our readers' previous efforts, with dozens of toys being delivered to our New York, Boston and Philadelphia offices daily.

In the next few days, we'll be working with our local charity partners to make the first delivery of holiday toys to underprivileged children in our cities.

Our photographers will be there to record the little ones' delight — and we'll publish the images before the holiday season so Metro's readers can see for themselves just what joy they are bringing this year. Below is an image of some of the toys delivered to our office yesterday. METRO

MILES DIXON/METRO

Swiss warn US, UK about huge spy leak

Secret information on counter-terrorism shared by foreign governments may have been compromised following a massive data theft by a senior IT technician for the NDB, Switzerland's intelligence service, European national security sources said.

Intelligence agencies in the United States and Britain are among those who were warned by Swiss authorities that their data could have been put in jeopardy, said one of the sources, who asked for anonymity when discussing sensitive information.

Swiss authorities arrested the technician suspected in the data theft last summer amid signs he was acting suspiciously. He later was released from prison while a criminal investigation by the office of Switzerland's Federal Attorney General continues, according to two sources familiar with the case.

The suspect's name was not made public. Swiss authorities believe he intended to sell the stolen data to foreign officials or commercial buyers.

A European security source said investigators now believe the suspect became disgruntled because he felt he was being ignored and his advice on operating the data systems was not being taken seriously.

One of the sources familiar with the investigation said that intelligence services like the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, also known as MI6, routinely shared data on counter-terrorism and other issues with the NDB. Swiss authorities informed U.S. and British agencies that such data could have been compromised, the source said.

REUTERS

▶ The headquarters of Britain's MI6 intelligence agency in London
GETTY IMAGES

Investigation

▶ News reports and a sources close to the investigation said investigators believe the technician downloaded terabytes, running into hundreds of thousands or even millions of printed pages, of classified material from the Swiss intelligence service's servers onto portable hard drives. He then carried them out of government buildings in a backpack.

In the news

Iran says it has drone, but US denies losing one

DUBAI. Iran said yesterday it had captured a U.S. drone in its airspace over the Gulf in the last few days, but the United States said there was no evidence to support the assertion.

The U.S. Navy said it had not lost any unmanned aircraft in the area. The four-foot surveillance drone is deployed in the region by the United States military but also by other countries.

In Washington, White House spokesman Jay Carney said, "We have no evidence that the Iranian claims are true."

The incident highlighted tensions in the Gulf as Iran and the United States demonstrate their military capabilities in the vital oil exporting region in a standoff over Iran's disputed nuclear program. REUTERS

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THE WORD

Metro's **Dorothy Robinson** shares her take on the world of gossip @dorothyatmetro dorothy.robinson@metro.us

Random sources state the obvious about Will and Kate

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

▶ The scene outside King Edward the VII Hospital in London where Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge, is resting after suffering from severe morning sickness.

The news of **Will** and **Kate**'s impending arrival has the tabloids in a tizzy — and scrambling for anyone, anyone at all to be quoted about it. I've compiled a sampling of the best of these random, mostly anonymous sources, all of whom state how Kate and Will will be good parents (as if anyone is going to say that she's going to become a baby-smacking alcoholic and he's planning on raising the baby as a racist). The best of the bunch, with an added bonus of **Snooki** (say what?) commentary:

▶ *"Kate will be a firm but fair mother. Kate will let her children have fun and freedom, but she will also make sure they do what is best for them."* **A "PAL" OF THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE, PER US WEEKLY**

"I'm sure she will be an amazing mom."

SNOOKI TO THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

▶ *"I can see William wanting to take time off in the modern paternity-leave style, so that he bonds with his child."* **A "FAMILY FRIEND" TO WWW.DAILYMAIL.CO.UK**

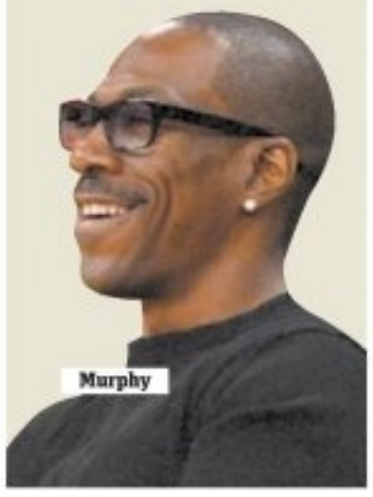
▶ *"[Kate and Will] both try to be as normal as possible in their private lives. ... Everyone's always said what great parents they'll be, since they are such a caring couple and very relaxed. They will lavish love on their children."* **JESSICA HAY, A "CHILDHOOD ACQUAINTANCE" OF KATE'S, TO AUSTRALIAN TABLOID NEW IDEA**

▶ *"This couple want to raise their baby just like us."* **JANE RIDLEY AND DANA SCHUSTER**

Eddie Murphy: Hollywood's most overpaid actor

Poor **Eddie Murphy**: He's just not drawing in the bucks like he used to.

Thanks to such bombs as "Meet Dave," "Imagine That" and "A Thousand Words," he's now Hollywood's most overpaid actor, per Forbes. In its annual list, determined by the difference between star salaries and their films' box office take, Murphy displaced **Drew Barrymore** for the No. 1 spot. **Katherine Heigl** came in at No. 2, with Oscar winners **Reese Witherspoon** and **Sandra Bullock** in the Top 5.



Murphy

Talking points

IRS seized Lohan's bank accounts

More trouble for **Lindsay Lohan**: The IRS has reportedly seized the "Liz and Dick" star's bank accounts because of her outstanding debt, according to TMZ. Lohan previously had liens filed against her for unpaid taxes from 2009 and 2010, totaling more than $233,000, but the government apparently got tired of waiting for her to make good on the debt. She is said to also owe money for 2011. Sources tell the website that Lohan is in panic mode and is scrambling for ways to make enough money to get out of debt pronto.

Lohan

Travolta's alleged lover sues star

A man who told the National Enquirer that he had a "steamy affair" with **John Travolta** while working as his pilot from 1981 to 1987 is now suing the actor, insisting he never signed a confidentiality agreement that would bar him from talking to the media about his time with the actor, according to TMZ. The man, **Doug Gotterba**, claims Travolta's lawyer, **Marty Singer**, threatened a lawsuit after the story was published. Singer maintains that Gotterba's termination agreement included a confidentiality clause and that the former employee is just out for attention. "Mr. Gotterba obviously filed this lawsuit to get his 15 minutes of fame," Singer says. "We plan to get this meritless case promptly dismissed."

Travolta

Jolie

Will Jolie quit acting?

Might her new film "Maleficent" mark the end of **Angelina Jolie**'s acting career? It's not out of the question, the actress says. "I have enjoyed being an actress. I have even been able to be a part of stories that mattered and I have done things for fun," Jolie tells Britain's Channel 4 News, once again prompting rumors of a planned early retirement. "But if it went away tomorrow, I would be very happy to be home with the children," she says. "I wake up in the morning as a mom and I turn on the news like everybody else and I see what's happening and I want to be part of the world in a positive way."

The feed ...

▶ **Checking in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.**

Today, Alec Baldwin is feeling inspired, Kathy Griffin is speculating, Paris Hilton is on the move and Rebel Wilson is thinking about her health.

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I'm gonna write a book. A novel. It's called A PRIVATE MISUNDERSTANDING. Can you guess what it's about? Can you guess what happens?

@kathygriffin
I bet Justin Bieber can blow a mean whistle

@ParisHilton
Just landed in Dubai. Next stop New York City.

@RebelWilson
I am going to go on a new cleanse - my weekend cleanse of cutting everything out of my diet except for chocolate DID NOT WORK!

Paris Hilton

Holiday window decorations from around the world

1. Polar Bears love Louis Vuitton (they make a lot of money, apparently). This furry beast is the star of the holiday window at the Louis Vuitton department store in Paris.

2. French department store Printemps Haussmann partnered with The House of Dior in designing their Christmas window display which features 74 handcrafted dolls wearing iconic Dior outfits.

3. The Macy's in New York doesn't get all of the holiday spirit: Here is the store's holiday window in Philadelphia.

4. Did you know that Macy's was the first store to feature a holiday window in the early 1870s? Here is their 2012 holiday window at their Harold Square location.

5. The holiday window at Henri Bendel in New York City.

A shot of one window from Bloomingdale's 59th Street

1: MIGUEL MEDINA/AFP; 2: DOMINIQUE CHARRIAU/WIREIMAGE; 3: GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY IMAGES; 4: JASON KEMPIN/GETTY IMAGES; 5: JAMIE MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES FOR HENRI BENDEL; 6: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES FOR BLOOMINGDALE'S

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‘Pippin’: With no strings attached

Matthew James Thomas learned the ropes from ‘Spider-Man,’ but for the ART’s latest production he is using a different type of support for his aerial activity

KEVIN H. LIN

▶ Matthew James Thomas gets high with a little help from his friends.

While starring in “Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark” on Broadway, actor Matthew James Thomas got used to flying through the air.

Thomas’ new gig at the American Repertory Theater has him doing a few crazy stunts again.

“The difference here is that we’re not using any wire,” says the British performer, who plays the lead role in “Pippin.”

At one point Thomas boldly leaps from a 15-foot pole into the arms of a team of acrobats.

“They use their arms and their strength to throw me around the stage and I have a moment on a hoop that is raised up into the sky,” explains Thomas.

In “Pippin,” a troupe of performers tells the self-discovery story of a young prince during medieval times.

“He’s put into different scenarios in which he has to choose how he acts, but he’s being manipulated by the people around him,” says Thomas. “It’s the everyman journey to realizing himself.”

The musical premiered in 1972, and its themes are tied to the social upheaval of that decade. But audiences in this era will connect with the same ideas.

“In some ways it’s quite scary but also exciting that life really hasn’t changed,” says Thomas. “The show wants people to feel and reevaluate instead of just going from thing to thing.”

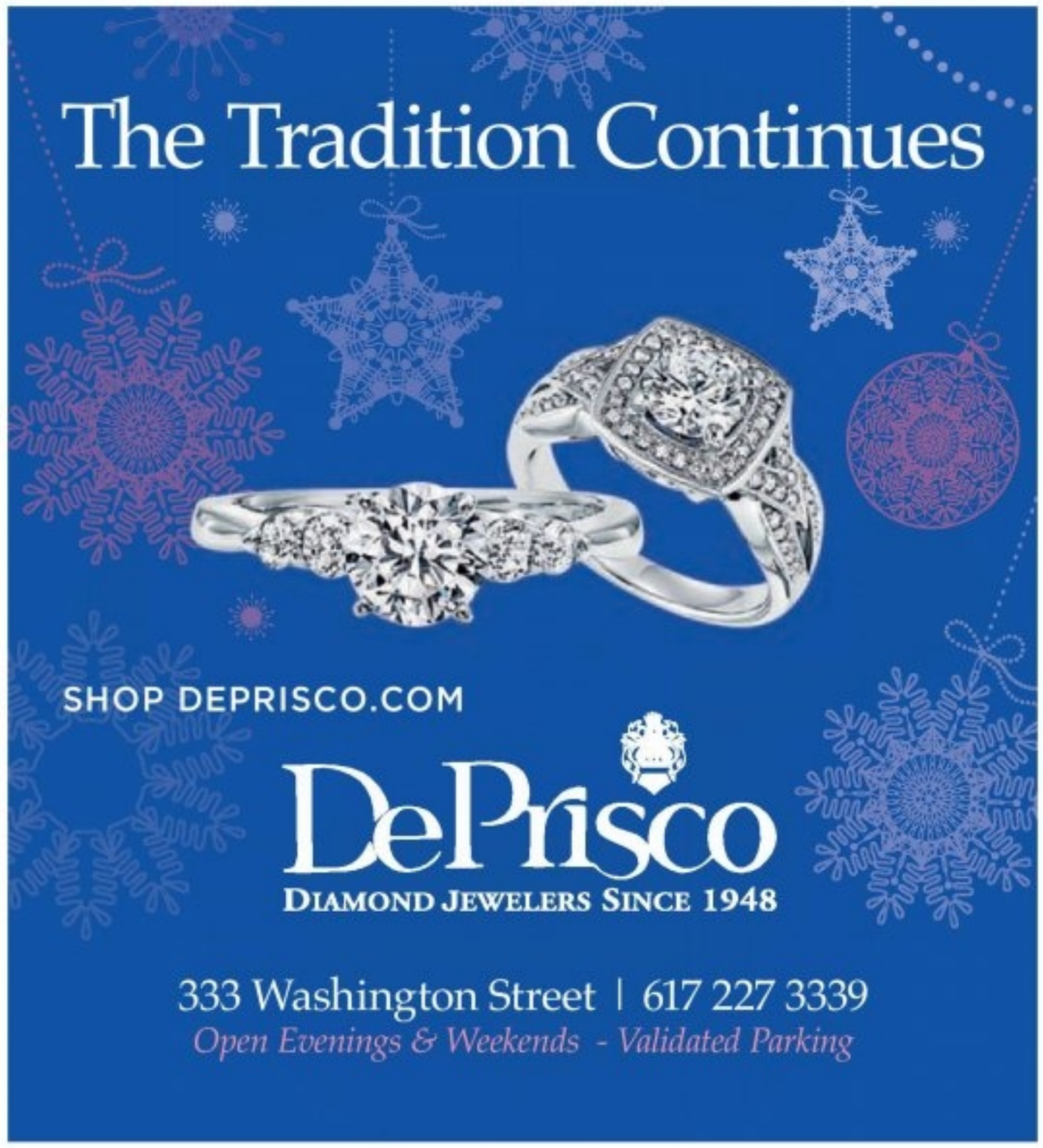
NORA DUNNE
nora.dunne@metro.us

If you go

‘Pippin’
Tonight through Jan. 20
Loeb Drama Center
64 Brattle St., Cambridge
$25-$65, 617-547-8300
www.amrep.org

Meet the all-star team

There are some big names behind this production of “Pippin”: In addition to all-star director Diane Paulus, creator Stephen Schwartz did music and lyrics for “Godspell” and “Wicked.” The choreography for the circus feats in this show comes from Gypsy Snider, who is known for work with the Montreal-based circus company Les 7 Doigts de la Main.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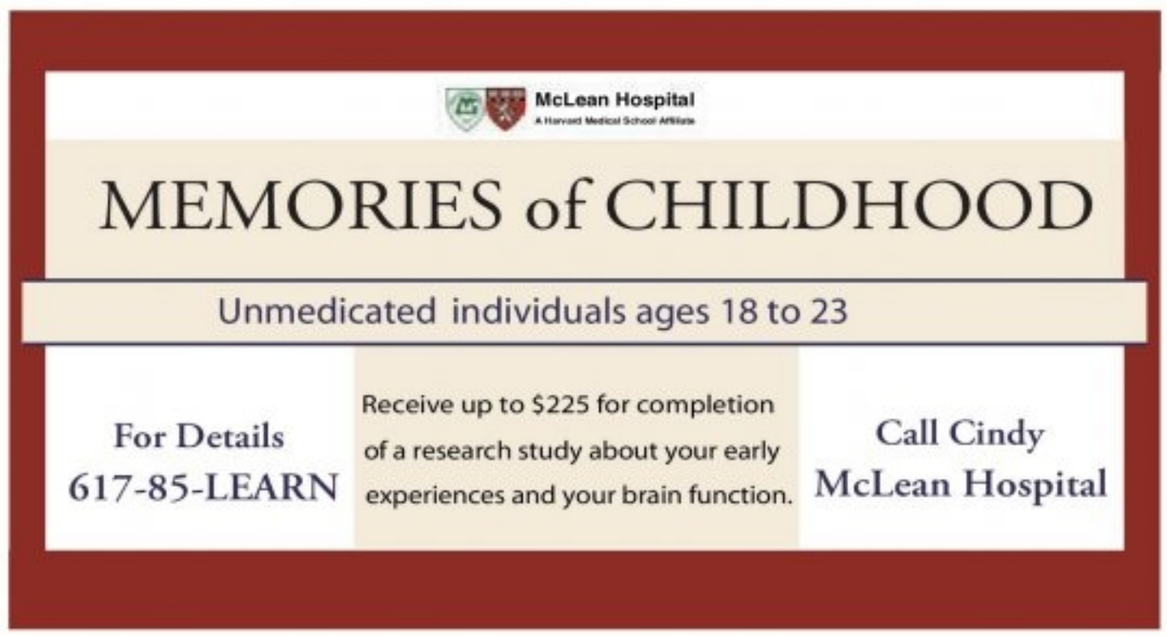
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TV watch list

▶ Santa Claus is coming to town on "American Horror Story."

BYRON COHEN/FX

'American Horror Story'

DRAMA. Santa Claus is the one on the naughty list when a terrifying St. Nick visits the residents of Briarcliff.
10 p.m., FX

'Arrow'

DRAMA. Oliver's still a little new to this whole vigilante thing himself, which hasn't stopped him from mentoring revenge-seeking Helena, aka the Huntress.
8 p.m., The CW

AMBER RAY

ROSALIE O'CONNOR

NEW 'NUTCRACKER' FROM SOUP TO NUTS

▶ The Mouse King and Nutcracker Prince get into it. Maybe that's why the sad bunny in this show is so sad.

Boston Ballet's artistic director Mikko Nissinen debuts his new take on the holiday classic ◐ We break down what works and what needs work ◐ We need to see more from Eliza French ◐ Less from the sad bunny

Who should see it?

▶ This is a sure bet for first-timers and veterans (young and old) who want to see a classic holiday production. If you've never been to the ballet, this is a good one to start with. If you're bringing your children, read E.T.A. Hoffmann's story together beforehand, so they can easily follow the story.

The sets

Working with award-winning designer Robert Perdziola, Nissinen reimagined all new sets and costumes that hold true to the spirit and warmth of the 1820s. The softer, warmer jewel tones make the stage more inviting — providing the ultimate personal experience. The snow scene is visually and technically breathtaking. It's like a painting out of a beautiful children's book. But the piece de resistance is the growing Christmas tree, outfitted in lights and ornaments. It overwhelms the stage and cuts to the magic of Christmas. It's simply stunning.

The choreography

The top-notch choreography is not all that different from previous productions. However, Act I was slightly sloppy — not the polished look Bostonians have grown accustomed to with Nissinen. The dancers seemed much more comfortable and at ease in Act II.

The characters

Those who are familiar with the show will not be disappointed with the returning comedic characters: The Bear, The Mouse King and the Black Sheep.

The newest character? A sad- and confused-looking bunny, whose limp body didn't bring any life to the scene — only sympathy and confusion.

The costumes

With the exception of the Snow Queen, Dew Drop Fairy and Sugar Plum Fairy, who sparkle and shimmer from head to toe, the costumes are not as grandiose as they once were, but are elegant in their simplicity, showing off the dancers' figures with a modern and delicate feel.

KATRINA T. LALLIER
katrina.lallier@metro.us

The dancers

Big things are to come for Eliza French (Clara). It is clear that the young dancer is a natural, both technically and artistically. The Nutcracker Prince (Lasha Khozashvili) and Sugar Plum Fairy (Lia Cirio) didn't seem to have as much onstage chemistry as the Snow Queen and King (Misa Kuranaga and Jeffrey Cirio), who pair beautifully.

While this new production still is working out the kinks, Nissinen's "Nutcracker" still is as beautiful and traditional as always, a true Christmas classic for years to come.

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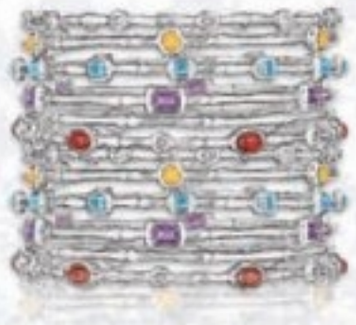

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EATING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Cheese plates and cocktails and cookies, oh my!
Make a plan and stick with it this party season

Holiday parties can be fun, but they're torture for anyone who's trying to lose weight. Mental toughness coach Steve Siebold, who is the author of "Die Fat or Get Tough: 101 Differences in Thinking Between Fat People and Fit People," offered Metro some tips on avoiding the dreaded extra poundage that can creep on this holiday season.

Set your intention: "Write down your goals," Siebold says. "The biggest part of sticking to a diet is making the decision. Without that, you will pile the weight back on."

Make a list, check it twice: "Have a plan before you walk in the door," he advises. "Be prepared for which foods you will eat. Take a long look at the food and ask, 'Is it good for me, or will it harm me?' We get hungry every three or four hours. Plan for that."

Have a snack beforehand: "Eat something healthy before you go out. Then you won't be so hungry that you eat the bad party food."

Nix the worst culprits: Cakes, cookies and candies — take them off your plate. "Avoid anything that is made with refined sugar," he says.

Watch the booze: "If you drink too much, your judgment gets compromised," Siebold cautions. "You start eating all the food you shouldn't. Beer is probably the worst for calories. Have only one or two glasses of wine. Drink water in between. Water is one of the great ways to fill up."

Remember your goals: "Giving yourself license to step off the diet is a slippery slope," he says. "You eat a little bit of this, and before you know it, you're back where you started."

47%
Of women admit they gain an average of four to five pounds over the holidays in winter months. *Source: Jenny Craig and FITNESS magazine*

38%
Of U.S. adults say they or a friend/relative have used the holidays as an excuse to drink more than they normally do. *Source: Caron Treatment Centers*

DIGITAL VISION

▶ Snacking before a party can help you avoid the cookies once you're there.

LINDA CLARKE
letters@metro.us

Health notes

Break out the Christmas sweaters

Stand Up to Cancer's Ugly Sweater Holiday Campaign is a good excuse to wear your tackiest garb this holiday season. First, pick how many days between now and Dec. 31 you'll wear your ugliest holiday sweater. Then, sign up at **www.su2c.org/ugly** to create a fundraising page for the days you don yours. You also can throw an ugly-sweater party and have guests donate. All proceeds raised will go back to the foundation, which works on research for new cancer therapies.

Back away from the food court

These new bars are smart picks for your next holiday shopping trip.

Seasonal Clif Bars: Clif's holiday flavors — this year's are Spiced Pumpkin Pie, Peppermint and Iced Gingerbread — are on shelves, and profits benefit Protect Our Winters, a nonprofit organization fighting climate change on behalf of the winter sports community. *$1.39 each, grocery stores*

Health Warrior Chia Bars: Sneak some chia seeds into your day with these 110-calorie bars, which boast 1,000 milligrams of omega-3s and 4 grams of fiber. The chocolate peanut butter flavor just got a delicious makeover. *$1.89 each, Whole Foods*

Balance Bar Dark: These three new dark-chocolate varieties pack 13 grams of protein and use cocoa that is Rainforest Alliance Certified. *$1.49 each, www.drugstore.com*

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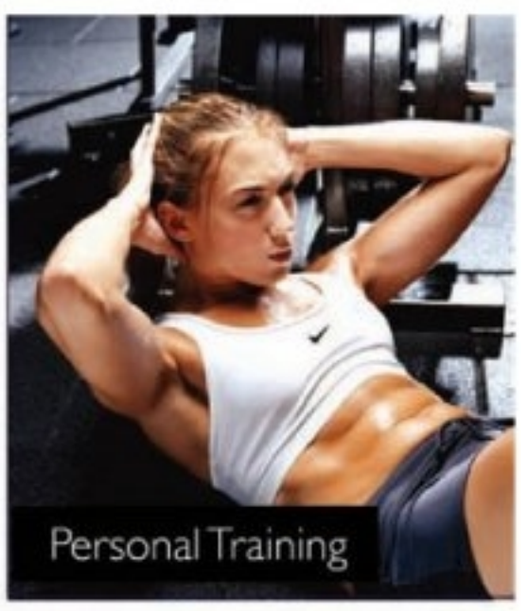

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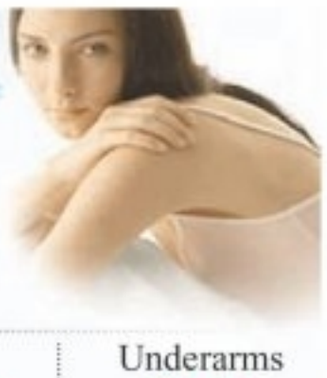

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THREE FESTIVE HOLIDAY DRINKS THAT WON'T WEIGH YOU DOWN

Rich, creamy eggnog, indulgent hot cocoa and fancy champagne cocktails are as much a part of holiday fun and tradition as the delicious food. But here's the not-so-merry part: Many of these seasonal libations pack in more calories, fat and sugar than the cake, cookies and fudge. As my holiday gift to you, I've created these celebratory sippers that deliver all of the good cheer without weighing you down. Bottoms up!

Slim-Style Eggnog

Eggnog is definitely at the top of Santa's naughty list. An 8-ounce pour, made with a "triple threat" ingredient list of cream, whole milk and egg yolks, will cost you a shocking 350 to 450 calories — and overload your system with 12 grams of saturated fat and more than 14 teaspoons of sugar. My slim-style version, made with low-fat milk and vanilla pudding mix, satisfies your holiday hankering for half the calories and sugar — and a fraction of the fat.

Directions: Combine 5 cups of cold 1 percent milk, one package vanilla instant pudding mix, ¾ teaspoon rum extract and ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg in a blender; pour into a pitcher and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes to allow the eggnog to set up. When you're ready to serve, pour into glasses and sprinkle on a little extra nutmeg. ***Makes five (1-cup) servings; 175 calories per serving***

Peppermint Hot Cocoa

Get cozy on the couch with my lightened-up take on this holiday classic. It has half the calories of coffee shop hot cocoa, but tastes every bit as rich and chocolaty.

Directions: Heat 3 cups of skim milk in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until the milk is hot and starting to steam. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in 4 teaspoons sugar, ¼ teaspoon each peppermint and vanilla extracts, a pinch of kosher salt and ¼ cup semisweet chocolate chips. Continue to whisk until the chocolate is completely melted. Pour into mugs and garnish with whipped cream if desired. ***Makes three (1-cup) servings; 175 calories per serving***

— *For more holiday health tips, visit* ***www.joybauer.com*** *and follow Joy on Facebook and Twitter (@joybauer).*

Try this

Pomegranate Sparkler

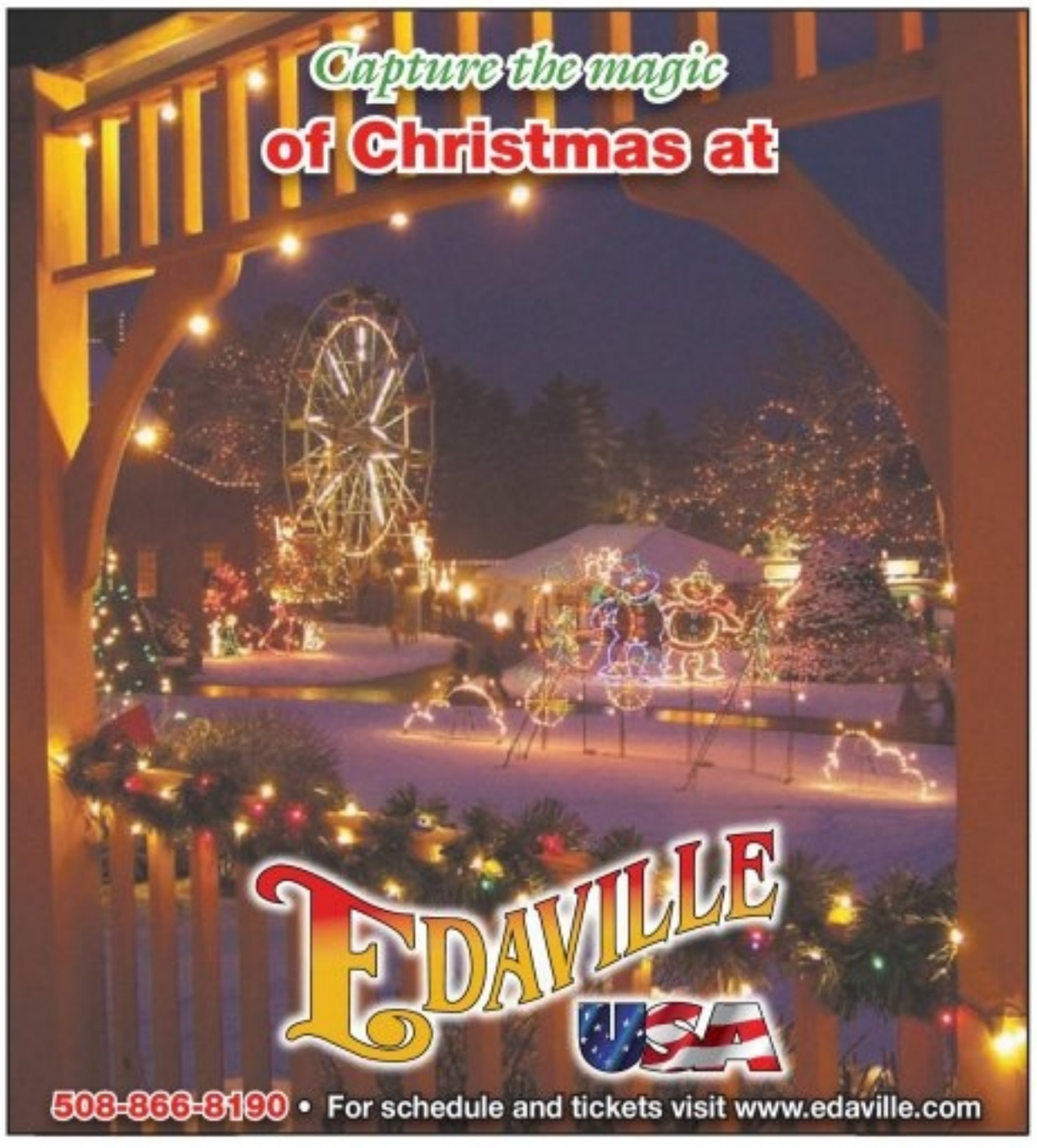
Make this year's New Year's Eve toast extra special by infusing your bubbly with an antioxidant-rich splash of pomegranate juice. Along with a few health perks, this fruity accent gives the drink a very merry red color and a lovely sweet-tart finish.

Directions: To make this chic cocktail, pour 3 ounces sparkling wine into a champagne flute, top it off with an ounce of pomegranate juice and drop in a few pomegranate arils (the fruit's seeds) for a fun garnish. ***Makes one (4-ounce) serving; 80 calories per serving***

JOHANNAH SAKIMURA

▶ This waist-friendly eggnog is about half the calories of a traditional pour.

Metro does not endorse the opinions of the author, or any opinions expressed on its pages. Opposing viewpoints are welcome. Send 100-word submissions to letters@metro.us.



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Letters

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Thank you for acts of kindness; they are never forgotten

RE: "PHOTO OF COP GIVING SHOES TO HOMELESS MAN GOES VIRAL" (METRO, NOV. 30-DEC. 2) NYPD officer Larry DePrimo proved once again that New York's Finest cares about its citizens. Officer DePrimo while on duty in the Times Square area came upon a homeless man without shoes or socks. He went to a shoe store and bought him a pair of all-weather boots and than went to another store and bought him socks. What really got to me: He went to put them on him, a true act of kindness. Now there are some who don't know what it means to be homeless, but I do. I was homeless for a time in the winter of '75 after the Vietnam War and found myself roaming the streets of Hempstead. I was just out of the Navy and had few friends or family members who could not help. It was a kind act of a stranger from Nigeria named Cyril who saw my plight and gave me shelter. Officer DePrimo is an example of a fine police officer who went above and beyond the call of duty, like many of our police officers do on a day-to-day basis. Officer DePrimo, saw a fellow human being hurting and did lend a helping hand. Now to all police officers you see tell them this: Thank you for all that you do.

FREDERICK R. BEDELL JR., VIA E-MAIL

As I was running some Christmas errands during lunch yesterday in Boston, I stepped off the train at Charles MGH. The train started to pull away from the station, but then stopped. The conductor opened his window, stuck his head out and shouted, "Where are you heading?" Just then, I saw an elderly blind man walking alone, hugging the wall and struggling to find his way along the platform with a red-and-white striped walking stick. He replied, "Downtown Crossing." "Follow my voice," the conductor instructed, "this is your train." The blind man, who was obviously fearful of falling onto the train tracks, slowly walked toward the conductor's voice and stepped onto the train.

I'm writing to tell you this story because it reminded me of something I've been meaning to tell the MBTA: Thank you. Thank you to the conductor who helped the blind man today and to all the other MBTA employees for their selfless acts of kindness throughout the year.

Bostonians are not always the best at remembering to say thanks, but we notice your acts and are grateful.

BILL GOTFREDSON, VIA E-MAIL

E-mail your letters: **letters@metro.us**

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words.
Metro reserves the right to edit all letters.
Please include your name and contact information.

I'm a boy, I'm a boy! But society won't let me act like it

RE: "PAGING GLORIA STEINEM?" (METRO, DEC. 3) Patti Stanger mentions that "men are getting more passive and [women] are getting stronger." Apparently Stanger wasn't paying attention in the 1990s, when the education system began punishing boys for acting like the males they were. Now we have a whole generation of drones who seem to have no direction or ambition. The anti-male crowd got what they wanted, but was it really worth it? I don't think so.

ROB DONNER, VIA E-MAIL

Horoscope

♐ Sagittarius **Nov. 23-Dec. 21.** Instead of scattering your forces all over the place, you should give your most meaningful objectives top priority. Taking a lot of potshots won't improve your marksmanship.

♑ Capricorn **Dec. 22-Jan. 19.** If, through poor judgment, you reopen an old wound, there is a strong possibility that you'll only make the same mistakes you made previously. Live and learn.

♒ Aquarius **Jan. 20-Feb. 19.** Leave your credit cards at home if you plan to go anyplace where extravagant items are likely to be displayed. You might be inclined to do more than window-wish.

♓ Pisces **Feb. 20-March 20.** The delicate line between being your own person and being detrimental to a team effort might get crossed if you place importance on the former.

♈ Aries **March 21-April 19.** Rumblings of an increased workload are likely to be coming your way. It behooves you to get cracking immediately. If you don't, the roar will only get steadier and louder.

♉ Taurus **April 20-May 20.** No matter how badly you desire it, it's not advisable to try to become all things to all people. You'll be left feeling inadequate when you fail at your impossible task.

♊ Gemini **May 21-June 20.** Don't be too hasty when trying to finalize a matter of critical importance. It's much more important to do the best job rather than the fastest.

♋ Cancer **June 21-July 22.** There is a good chance you could still be holding a grudge against someone, so for the sake of inner peace, it behooves you to avoid this person as much as you can.

♌ Leo **July 23-Aug. 22.** This is likely to be an unusually good day to sort out any disturbing financial affairs. Your budget can be improved upon by trimming needless expenses.

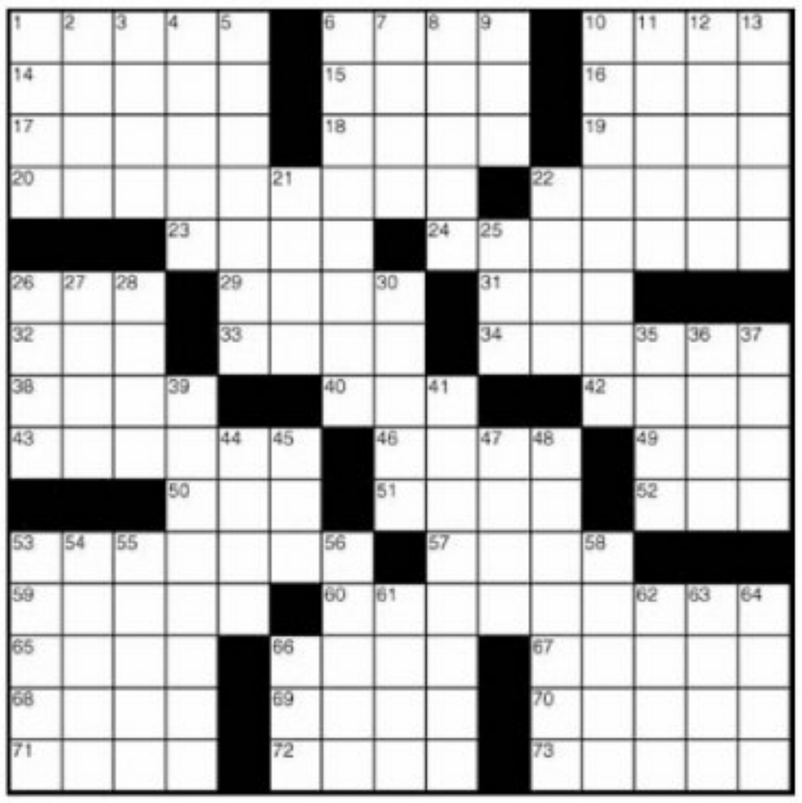
♍ Virgo **Aug. 23-Sept. 22.** Although you may feel that you can easily come out ahead in a competitive situation, don't underestimate your adversaries. They could be stronger than you think.

♎ Libra **Sept. 23-Oct. 23.** It behooves you to keep all of your endeavors as basic as possible. Be careful not to further complicate situations that are already a trifle trickier than you'd like.

♏ Scorpio **Oct. 24-Nov. 22.** Under most circumstances, you're the type of person who is reasonably cautious about taking huge risks, yet today your discipline might be rather low. Try to be extra-careful.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Across
1 Gondolier's "road"
6 Footnote note
10 Those against
14 Relish tray item
15 Pesters
16 Bard's river
17 "The Luncheon on the Grass" painter
18 Pelts
19 Like autumn leaves
20 Fritz's pub
22 Nanny
23 "Little piggies"
24 Playhouse
26 Common sense
29 Gymnastics move
31 Web addr.
32 Turkish honorific
33 Arctic hazard
34 Threw the dice
38 Whit
40 San Francisco hill
42 Sherpa's sighting
43 Brawl
46 Lincoln's st.
49 Holiday mo.
50 1040 pro
51 "Soapdish" actress
52 Molecular biology topic
53 Qualm
57 Porpoise relative
59 Wide awake
60 Bell-shaped animal
65 Dressy event
66 Ranch concern
67 Racoonlike mammal
68 Church or Stonestreet
69 Summit
70 German pistol
71 Risque
72 Bandleader — Kenton
73 Flee to the JP



Down
1 Remove tangles
2 Mountain range near China
3 Prime-time hour
4 Circumvent
5 Remits (2 wds.)
6 Herb tea
7 Smear
8 Wading bird
9 Future bks.
10 Idly
11 Easily seen
12 Like Vikings
13 Dirty look
21 Recount
22 First-century emperor
25 Half of a Heston role
26 Very thin model
27 Russian epic hero
28 Bye, in Bristol (hyph.)
30 Lowly laborers
35 Advance
36 Harrow rival
37 Met celeb
39 Precision
41 Obligated
44 Dr.'s visit
45 "Gal" of song
47 "Big Daddy" Ives
48 Save from a landfill
53 More judicious
54 Bow or Barton
55 Heirloom
56 Cockpit button
58 Run — of the law
61 Ms. Bombeck
62 "Othello" heavy
63 Dance movement
64 Engage
66 Contains

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		1	3			5		6
		5				8		
7		8			2	3		
8				5		9	3	
6			1					
	9		7		3		1	

SUDOKU **LEVEL: EASY**

9						1		3
	1	5		3				
			9			4	8	7
			7	8	4			6
	5						7	
7			6	1	5			
3	9	1			6			
				4		9	6	
4		6						5

SUDOKU **LEVEL: HARD**

Solution to yesterday's crossword

How to play Sudoku: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

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In the news

Down 'n' out

Patriots receiver Julian Edelman will miss the remainder of the 2012 season because of a broken foot. The multi-purpose Edelman had been enjoying his best season to date, as he had 21 receptions on the year as well as a punt return for a score.

Red Sox Victor-ious in landing outfield help

RONALD C. MODRA/GETTY IMAGES

▶ Shane Victorino spent the latter part of 2012 with the Dodgers.

▶ MLB winter meetings get wild for Red Sox as team inks OF Shane Victorino ▶ Effectively puts team out of Josh Hamilton sweepstakes ▶ Roster coming into form

Boston isn't messing around at this week's winter meetings in Nashville, as the Red Sox made their second significant signing in as many days yesterday by reportedly inking free-agent and switch-hitting outfielder Shane Victorino.

The contract is reportedly for three years and $39 million, the exact same numbers given to Mike Napoli on Monday. Victorino will likely be the team's starting right fielder, although he's spent much of his career in center.

Victorino, 32, has played in the big leagues for nine seasons with three teams, most notably the Phillies for eight years before being traded to the Dodgers in the middle of last season.

Best known for his defense and speed, Victorino has also been noted as a good clubhouse guy, which is an attribute Red Sox brass have said they are looking for.

In nine seasons, Victorino is a career .275 hitter, while batting .279 and .255, respectively, the past two seasons. As a switch-hitter, he gives the Red Sox more of a left-right lineup balance, but hits better from the right side. He is a career .301 hitter against lefties, and just .267 against righties.

It's been noted by some that he is on the decline, so a three-year deal might be a little much, but it will still be a respectable signing, considering the options available.

Signing Victorino also means the Red Sox essentially have passed on free-agent outfielders Josh Hamilton and Nick Swisher, as well as last year's right fielder Cody Ross. Hamilton had reportedly been seeking a long-term deal, while signing Swisher would require the Red Sox to give a draft pick to the Yankees.

Ross remains a bit of a question mark, as the two sides both appeared interested during the season. But as time went on, they differed on the number of years. Ross wanted three years, but the Red Sox wouldn't go past two.

Giving both Napoli and Victorino three-year deals makes one wonder what exactly the issue was with Ross, who hit .267 with 22 home runs in Boston last year and was the only true "clubhouse guy" on the roster.

The Red Sox lineup is finally coming together after well over a month of the front office being silent on acquisitions. The signing also sticks with the organization's philosophy of staying disciplined and keeping away from long-term contracts, as well as holding onto draft picks and prospects.

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"When we've been at our best, we've made good decisions — disciplined decisions."

RED SOX GM BEN CHERINGTON IN AUGUST, ON THE DIRECTION OF THE FRANCHISE

13 Victorino posted 13 RBIs in the 2008 postseason as he helped guide the Phillies to a World Series championship.

RYAN HANNABLE
sports@metro.us

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Eagles land coach in Addazio

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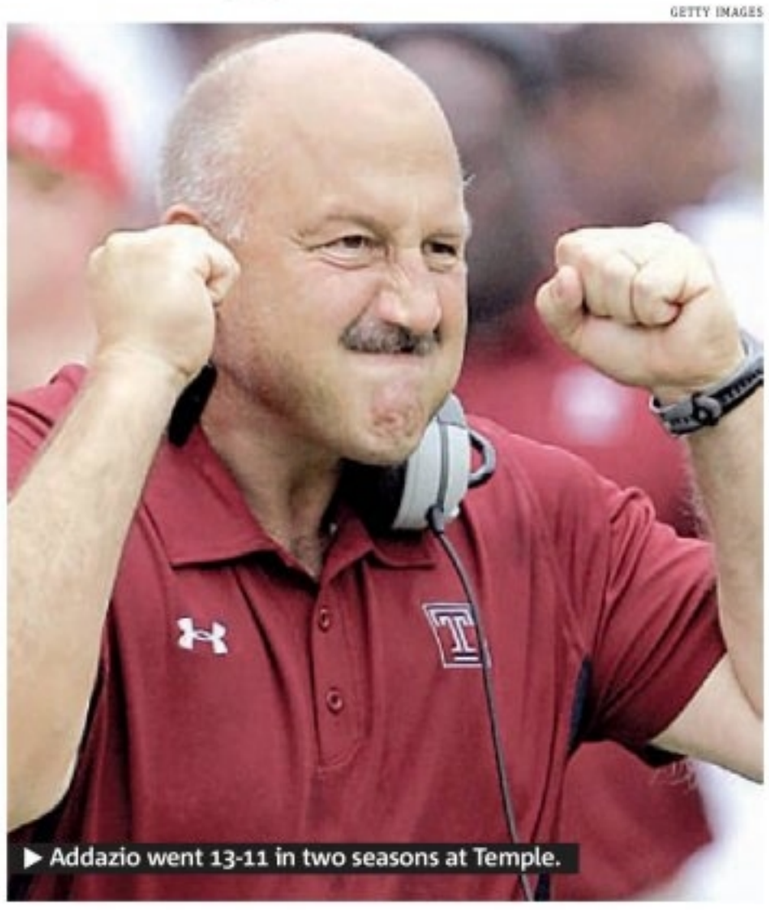

▶ Addazio went 13-11 in two seasons at Temple.

◗ Boston College looks to turn around football program by hiring Temple head man ◗ Urban Meyer disciple known for his shrewd recruiting

Last week, after failing to qualify for a bowl game in his first year guiding Temple in the Big East, Steve Addazio promised that 2013 would be different.

"This offseason won't be a box of chocolates," Addazio warned. "It's 2013 in my mind right now." Well, when the calendar turns to 2013, it will be completely different for Addazio. The head football coach at Temple resigned yesterday and accepted the same position at Boston College. He takes over a struggling BC program that went just 2-10 last season.

"We are very excited to have Steve Addazio leading Boston College football and look forward to an extraordinary future," Boston College athletic director Brad Bates said about his first signature hire at The Heights.

"He is a proven winner with an extensive history of success as an assistant and head coach that includes two national championships."

BOSTON COLLEGE AD BRAD BATES, ON HIRING STEVE ADDAZIO

Addazio leaves Temple after compiling a 13-11 record in two seasons, including the school's first bowl win in 32 years. Prior to that, Addazio won two national championships while serving as Florida's offensive-line coach.

One of the deciding factors for Bates in hiring Addazio may have been his recent success in recruiting. Upward momentum was evidenced by Temple's 2012 recruiting class (ranked No.1 in the MAC) and by having three Owls get selected in the 2012 NFL Draft.

Addazio replaces Frank Spaziani, who went 21-29 in four seasons as head coach. ESPN reported that Ball State coach Pete Lembo, Notre Dame defensive coordinator Bob Diaco and New Orleans Saints offensive line coach Aaron Kromer were finalists for the Eagles' job.

MIKE GREGER
mgreger@metro.us

Next big thing?

Boston College hopes that new head football coach Steve Addazio follows in the footsteps these former head men at The Heights:

- **Jeff Jagodzinski** went 20-8 in two seasons as BC's head coach with two trips to the ACC Championship Game.
- **Tom O'Brien** went 75-45 from 1997 to 2006 and posted a six-game bowl win streak from 2000 to 2005.
- **Tom Coughlin** went 21-13-1 with BC from 1991 to 1993 before becoming a Super Bowl-winning coach in the NFL.
- **Jack Bicknell** guided the Eagles through the highly successful "Doug Flutie years" and posted a 59-51-1 record at Chestnut Hill.

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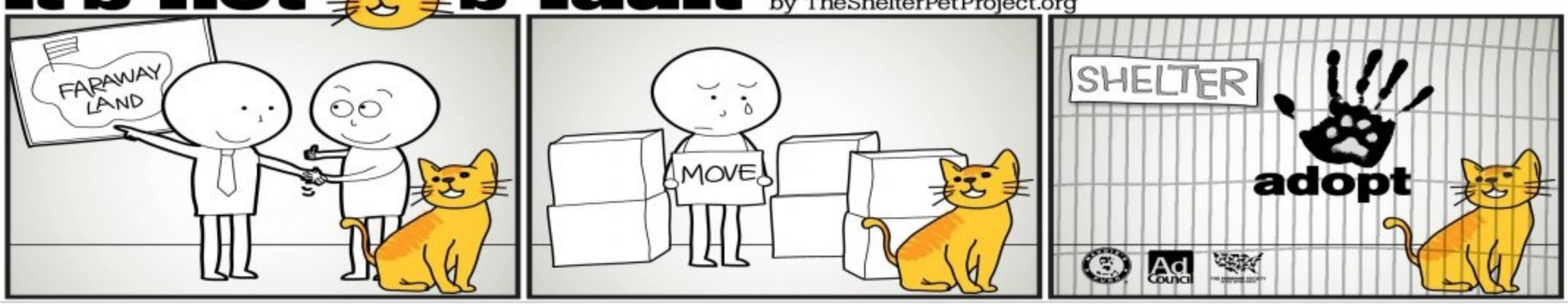

at home with metro

Housing market, poststorm

Expert Sissy Lappin explains the implications of Hurricane Sandy and the future effects of a rising sea level on the coastal real estate market

Houston-based real estate broker Sissy Lappin knows all about "superstorms." She saw Katrina's devastation as she helped evacuees at the Houston Astrodome and became a storm victim herself when Hurricane Ike hit in 2008.

"Our neighborhood was the last to get power back; it took over a month," says Lappin, the author of the new home-buying guide, "Simple and Sold." "If Hurricane Katrina, Ivan and Ike aren't sufficient proof of the power of storm surges, Sandy is the poster child," says Lappin.

In the wake of such catastrophic weather events, she says a storm economy springs up. Firstly, the rental market booms: "Rental rates go up. The reason is simple — people have to rent a home while their home is being repaired," she says. Next, the home market slows down. "The first six months are a recovery time. Homes will sell, but at a slower pace."

After six months, however, home sales boom. "The sellers that were going to sell have now fixed their homes, and the buyers are ready to make a move. The pent-up demand is unleashed," says Lappin.

The long-term prospects for the coastal real estate market, however, are not good.

"Storm surges will only get worse as sea levels continue to rise. We are seeing properties that had never flooded now suffering every two to three years," says Lappin. "The values of these properties will continue to decline, and more areas will be zoned in the flood plain. And once they are in the flood plain, they never come out."

▶ Staten Island, New York, is still trying to recover from Hurricane Sandy.

▶ New Jersey towns along the shore were devastated by Sandy.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

▶ This home has been hit with flooding twice.

▶ Pilings are all that remains of the New Jersey boardwalk.

Flood zones

Lappin explains why people build their homes in areas prone to natural disasters.

"You have to ask why anyone would take the financial risk of building in an area that could flood. The answer? The government encourages it with your tax dollars," says Lappin. "These homes are insured by the federal government's National Flood Insurance Program."

Why is the government in the insurance business? "Because the fourth-largest lobbying group, the National Association of Realtors, spent millions of dollars making sure the federal government makes this insurance available so homes still can be bought and sold in these communities."

LINDA CLARKE
letters@metro.us

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P: (617)228-5313
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About

Opening in February 2013, the all new residences at Hamilton Crossing offer modern amenities in an unbeatable downtown location. The studio, one, and two bedroom apartments feature hardwood floors, stainless steel appliances, ample closet space, and large floor to ceiling windows. This professionally managed 12 story building also features on site laundry and 24 hr maintenance service.

Right outside your front door you will find countless shopping, dining, and entertainment options and the historic Boston Common is just one block away. Getting around town will prove effortless given the easy access to the Red, Orange, and Green MBTA lines.

Features

Unit Features
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New Stainless Appliances - Diswasher/Microwave
Central Heat and A/C • Floor to Ceiling Windows
Silestone Quartz Countertops • New Two Tone Kitchen Cabinets
Furnished Units Available

Building Features
Laundry on each Floor • 24 Hour Emergency Maintenance
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at home with metro

October numbers show market boost

The year isn't even over and 2012 already has seen more home sales than 2011 Condo sales up almost 50 percent from this time last year

Some real estate brokers are calling it the best market in 10 years, and recent statistics back up the buzz.

October condo and single-family home sales increased considerably during the past year, according to a recent report from The Warren Group, publisher of Banker & Tradesman.

The sale of single-family homes in October rose 21 percent from October 2011, stated the report. Sales in the first 10 months of the year are up almost 22 percent with 39,541 sold in 2012 compared to 32,428 in 2011.

"Home sales for the first 10 months of the year have already surpassed sales in all of 2011," says The Warren Group CEO Timothy M. Warren Jr. "Record low mortgage rates, an improved economy and growing consumer confidence are boosting the housing market in Massachusetts and around the country."

"Bottom line, this is a great time to be a Boston condo seller — and for that matter, be a Boston real estate broker."
JOHN FORD, OWNER OF FORD REALTY IN BEACON HILL

By the numbers

4,044
single-family homes sold in October

1,607
condominiums sold in October

— Source: The Warren Group

Condo sales in October had a remarkable increase of 48.8 percent compared to October of 2011. Year-to-date sales of condos also are up 29 percent, with 16,239 condos sold in 2012 compared to 12,559 in 2011.

"Bottom line, this is a great time to be a Boston condo seller — and for that matter, be a Boston real estate broker," says John Ford, owner of Ford Realty in Beacon Hill. "I, like many downtown Boston real estate brokers, am experiencing my best December sales outlook in the last 10 years."

The median price of single-family homes was $270,000 in October, the same as last year. Condo sale prices jumped less than 1 percent from October 2011 to $255,000, according to the report.

CHRISTINA WALLACE
christina.wallace@metro.us

PHOTODISC

▶ Massachusetts saw a lot of happy scenes like this one in 2012.

This month at The Boston Home Center

Since 1996 The Boston Home Center has helped more than 20,000 Bostonians be successful homeowners. We offer an array of FREE classes on everything from the basics of homebuying to help for homeowners and everything in between.

How to Buy a Foreclosed Property

A two-hour seminar about the purchase process, legal issues, mortgage and property selection and home repair resources.

December 10: 5:45pm-7:45pm
Codman Square Library, 690 Washington St - Dorchester

December 17: 5:45pm-7:45pm
Lower Mills Branch Library, 27 Richmond St - Dorchester

Financial Assistance Workshops / Meet The Lenders

A financial assistance workshop from 5:00pm - 6:00pm followed by a two-hour networking opportunity to meet with several different mortgage lenders, to help you understand their products, and your purchase and refinance options.

December 12 : 5:00-7:45 pm
Honan Allston Branch Library, 300 No. Harvard St., Allston

How To Live Within Your Means

This two-hour seminar will help you evaluate your current financial status, and teach you how to adjust your finances.

December 6: 5:45pm-7:45pm
Uphams Corner Branch Library, 500 Columbia Rd - Dorchester

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Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development

at home with metro

Mortgage-interest deduction in danger: President Obama

GETTY IMAGES

▶ The president held a Twitter town hall.

As the "fiscal cliff" debate heats up, President Barack Obama tweeted that mortgage-interest deductions could be on the chopping block if Republicans don't agree to raise taxes on the wealthiest Americans, Housing Wire reported.

While rumors have been circulating since the election that lawmakers may scrap the once-sacred tax break, the Tweet marked the first time the president has officially stated the policy shift is up for discussion in Washington.

On Monday, President Obama held a Twitter town hall, and user Emma Robertson tweeted using the president's hashtag #My2k to express her concern that mortgage-interest deductions would get pulled into the contentious budget debate.

"As a home owner, I worry deductions for home owners are at risk. Is that the case?" Robertson tweeted.

The president replied using his official Twitter signature, "@soitgoesem breaks for middle class impt for families & econ. if top rates don't go up, danger that middle class deductions get hit – bo"

As The Real Deal previously reported, mortgage interest deductions represent a nearly $100 billion-a-year revenue drain for the U.S. Treasury. But powerful lobbying groups such as the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders are sure to throw their weight against any attempt to cut the deduction.

CHRISTOPHER CAMERON

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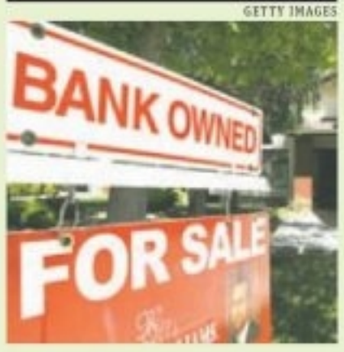

Foreclosures down nationwide in October

Foreclosures nationwide in October dropped 25 percent compared to the previous month and 17 percent year-over-year, a CoreLogic report released on Monday shows.

Completed foreclosures in the month of October totaled 58,000, down from 70,000 in October 2011 and from 77,000 in September 2012, the report shows. The decline was partly due to alternative disposition methods, meaning forebearances, loan modifications and refinancing, said Mark Fleming, chief economist for CoreLogic, in the report.

Since the financial crisis began, 3.9 million homes have been lost to foreclosure. Prior to the crash, the national monthly average for foreclosed homes was about 21,000.

New York state was one of the five states — joining Florida, New Jersey, Illinois and Nevada — with the highest number of foreclosures as a percentage of homes with a mortgage, with 5.3 percent of mortgaged homes here in foreclosure, according to the report.

But all in all, a decrease in foreclosure activity is a signpost on the road to recovery, CoreLogic CEO Anand Nallathambi said in a statement from the firm.

"A lower foreclosure inventory is a good indicator of improving housing markets," he said. "The downward trend in foreclosure inventories over the past year is yet another signal that a recovery is gaining traction." GUELDA VOIEN FOR THE REAL DEAL

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IS YOUR PET GETTING OLDER?

By Attorney George Warshaw

With the holiday season upon us let us not forget our best friends, the furry four-legged creatures that make our lives so much better.

As happens to us all, our pets are aging. Some are getting senior in life but unlike us, they can't tell us what's hurting or what's going on. I would like to tell you about something I learned that I think you might like to know.

I attended a discussion recently at the MSPCA/Angell Memorial Hospital on Aging Pets. I didn't really want to go because I thought it would bring me to tears, which it did, but I have no regrets.

The discussion was led by noted Veterinarians Joseph Kaye, who spoke about Canine Cognitive Dysfunction – senility, Alzheimer's and loss of awareness and recognition that also occurs in pets, and Lisa Moses, who spoke on Pain Management.

Our pets suffer from the same maladies as we do, but at Angell there are people who can help determine if something is wrong and do something about it. Perhaps most critical is pain management. Angell is one of the few institutions in the world that has a clinic and practice devoted to managing your pet's pain, whether it be from aging or surgery. They often use newly developed and innovative approaches that are not used by many veterinarians.

So this holiday season, if your aging or surgically treated pet has been acting differently than when it was younger, consider getting an evaluation – and don't forget the best gift you can make this season is a donation to the MSPCA, http://www.mspca.org/donate, or a rescue organization. © 2012 George Warshaw.

GWA

George Warshaw is an attorney and pet care advocate.
Please send comments about pets to metro@warshawlaw.com.

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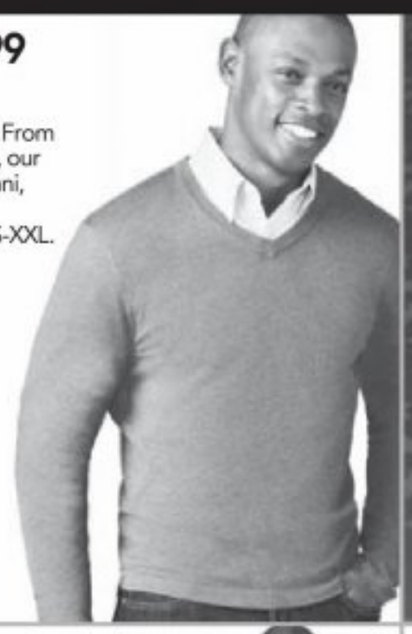

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